

Washington, DC – Today, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) applauds President Obama's nomination of former Washington Governor Gary Locke as his Secretary of Commerce, and urges swift Senate confirmation. CAPAC endorsed his nomination during a meeting yesterday.

Gary Locke became the first Asian American governor in the continental United States, and the nation's first Chinese American governor, when he was elected to office in Washington State in 1996. In 2000, he won his reelection by a vast margin, and worked to improve Washington's education and transportation systems, strengthen economic opportunity and expand access to healthcare. After he left office, he became a partner at the Seattle-based law firm Davis Wright Tremaine, where he has focused on China practice, energy, governmental relations, and corporate diversity counseling.

"A longtime friend and trailblazer in the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, Gary Locke is an excellent pick," said Rep. Mike Honda, CAPAC chair. "Over the years, I have travelled extensively with Gary, visiting Asian American communities around the country, and know that he has a nuanced understanding of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity within all our communities. This understanding will be critical in his oversight of both domestic and international agencies within the Department, including the Census Bureau, the Minority Business Development Agency, and the International Trade Administration."

The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus has been active on many issues within the jurisdiction of the Commerce Department, including those within the Census Bureau. CAPAC is committed to working with the Congressional Black and Hispanic Caucuses to ensure appropriate outreach to and an accurate count of ethnic and linguistic minorities for all census surveys, particularly the 2010 decennial census. CAPAC also continues to support minority business development activities within the Minority Business Development Agency.

"Gary is used to trailblazing for the Asian American community, and we are proud of his contributions," said Honda. "Once again, President Obama has proven his commitment to building a team with the perspective and talent needed to restore hope and opportunity in our country, reflective of our nation's diversity. We urge our colleagues in the Senate to confirm this nomination."